A.8.

Hugh Cecil Earl of Lonsdale.

367 Horses and Harness. By **Edward Fordham Flower,** Author of "Bits and Bearing-Reins." London. 1876.

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HORSES AND HARNESS.

BY

EDWARD FORDHAM FLOWER.

AUTHOR OF

BITS AND BEARING-REINS.

LONDON:
WILLIAM RIDGWAY, 169, PICCADILLY, W.
1876.

Price One Shilling.

HORSES AND HARNESS.

The four hearse horses especially reared and pranced, and showed their highest action, as if they knew a man was dead, and triumphed in it. "They break us, drive us, ride us, ill-treat, abuse, and maim us for their pleasure. But they die, Hurrah! they die!"—CHARLES DICKENS, from "Martin Chuzzlewit."

WHEN the first edition of my little pamphlet, "Bits and Bearing-Reins," was published, only last year, I hoped to call the attention of some of the owners and drivers of carriage horses to the unnecessary pain inflicted by severe bits and gag bearing-reins, as they were then used; but I did not expect that my appeal would be so warmly responded to, or so soon produce a visibly good effect. That result could not have been obtained by my single efforts: they have been liberally and largely aided by many friends, known and unknown, and especially by the Press, not only in England, but in Scotland and Ireland. The spark of benevolence which I endeavoured to light, they fanned into a flame. Newspapers, journals, magazines, sporting and religious papers, came forward to denounce the cruelty of the present fashionable system of treating horses, and to encourage me to

proceed in my endeavours to obtain a more humane and sensible method.

It is about two years since I entered upon this crusade, and no one can guess the amount of labour and anxiety it involves. It seems a small subject, and yet it extends everywhere. In the scale of created beings, next to the human race, certainly comes the horse. For intelligence, usefulness, sensitiveness, he is second only to man, and withal he is so perfectly helpless, so easily subdued, less capable of self-defence than almost any other animal—his usual fate is to have his years of health and strength unnaturally shortened by injudicious and cruel treatment, and when age comes on, and strength fails, to be put to harder work, with coarser and less food, and more comfortless stall, going down and down, till death releases him. Many of these valuable animals, for which hundreds of pounds are now given, will in a short time be sold for as many shillings, even by people who have had years of work out of them, and could well afford mercifully to insure them from future hardship, by having them put to a quick and painless death. No other animal has so hard a life, or serves his taskmaster so willingly and so generously ; he acts a conspicuous part in the affairs of human life; we want him at every turn ; for drudgery, for pleasure, for show, we call in his aid; therefore let us not needlessly add to his burdens by wanton cruelty, or wilful ignorance.

As I have denounced severe bits, and gag bearing-reins, many people ask my advice as to what should be substituted, and what kind of harness I would recommend. I have thought earnestly upon the subject, and consulted many eminently practical men; in the following pages I shall give some of the conclusions to which I have arrived, and which, with the aid of the engravings, I think will be clear. Of course it is not possible to lay down rules which will suit all cases, especially where there are such various and powerful elements to be worked upon, masters, mistresses, coachmen, grooms, horses, all of different tempers and habits; but what I say, if carried out in a *kind and helpful spirit*, will apply to most cases, and I feel sure would materially lessen the number of accidents, and the trouble of driving what are called unruly horses.

I have a vast amount of material which has come to me in letters from all parts of the kingdom and from abroad; also articles, paragraphs, letters, &c., which have appeared in newspapers, &c.; from these I must cull a few to show that my opinions are upheld by many practical and experienced men of all classes, noblemen, gentlemen, coachmen, several first class saddlers, and by all humanitarians who have thought upon the subject. It is ignorance, prejudice, fashion, and—in too many cases—wilful cruelty that has to be contended with. I am happy to have made many

converts, and hope to be able to go on talking, writing, probably boring my friends and the public, till the sight, now every day to be seen, of horses foaming, fretting, prancing, maddened with pain from their curbs, gags, and whips, is banished from this so-called civilised country. Go into the Park or fashionable streets: just look at the gagged up horses, either standing or in motion, and you will see that my picture of "Torture"* is no exaggeration; and the fair occupants of the carriages sit smilingly unconscious of the pain they are causing; the coachman careless of it, perhaps rejoicing that he has the power to tyrannise over the unhappy victims of his ignorance, bad temper, or conceit.

Then, what a relief it is to the eye and the feelings to see the happy exceptions; a beautiful pair stepping freely and elegantly, with the natural graceful curve of the back and neck, pleasure, not pain, expressed in the countenances (for horses can express both), answering instinctively to every touch of the reins, guided by light and gentle hands: that is indeed a beautiful sight—why is it not oftener seen? The answer, I suppose, is that coachmen do not know how to drive: as "Nimrod" observes, "to be a Coachman you must take your degree." Then why not have a school for Coachmen as well as for Cookery? it is quite as much needed: surely the Royal Society for the

* See "Bits and Bearing-Reins," Ridgway, 169 Piccadilly.

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals could not spend a part of their large incomings better than in establishing one, and *leading* public opinion, instead of "waiting for it to be more advanced upon the subject," as one of their delegates said at a late public meeting.

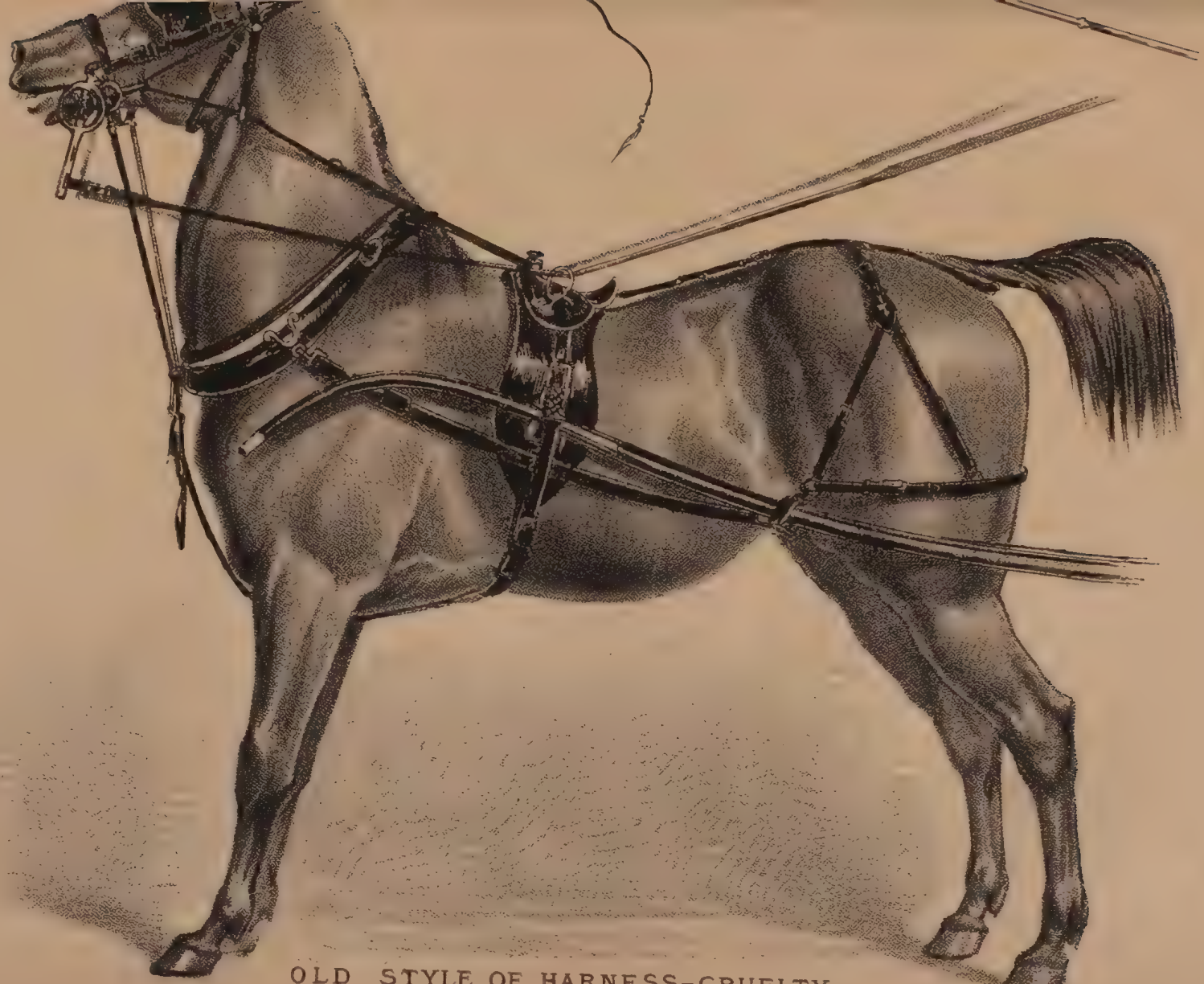
When I was travelling in Scotland last autumn I saw no bearing-reins but those that were imported by a few Londoners, whose coachmen are trying to engraft the absurd practice even in that hilly country. Bad example is contagious, and quickly followed; but it takes line upon line, and precept upon precept to inculcate even a little common sense, especially when it involves a slight amount of self-sacrifice or trouble, either in learning or teaching.

I have not said much about bearing-reins for cart horses, though their use is even more to be condemned than those for lighter draft, without even the poor excuse of wishing to improve the horse's appearance. Depriving the animal of the use of the muscles of his neck and shoulders, which the bearing-rein always does in a greater or less degree, is quite as absurd as it would be to tie up one of his legs, and then expect him to do his work equally well.*

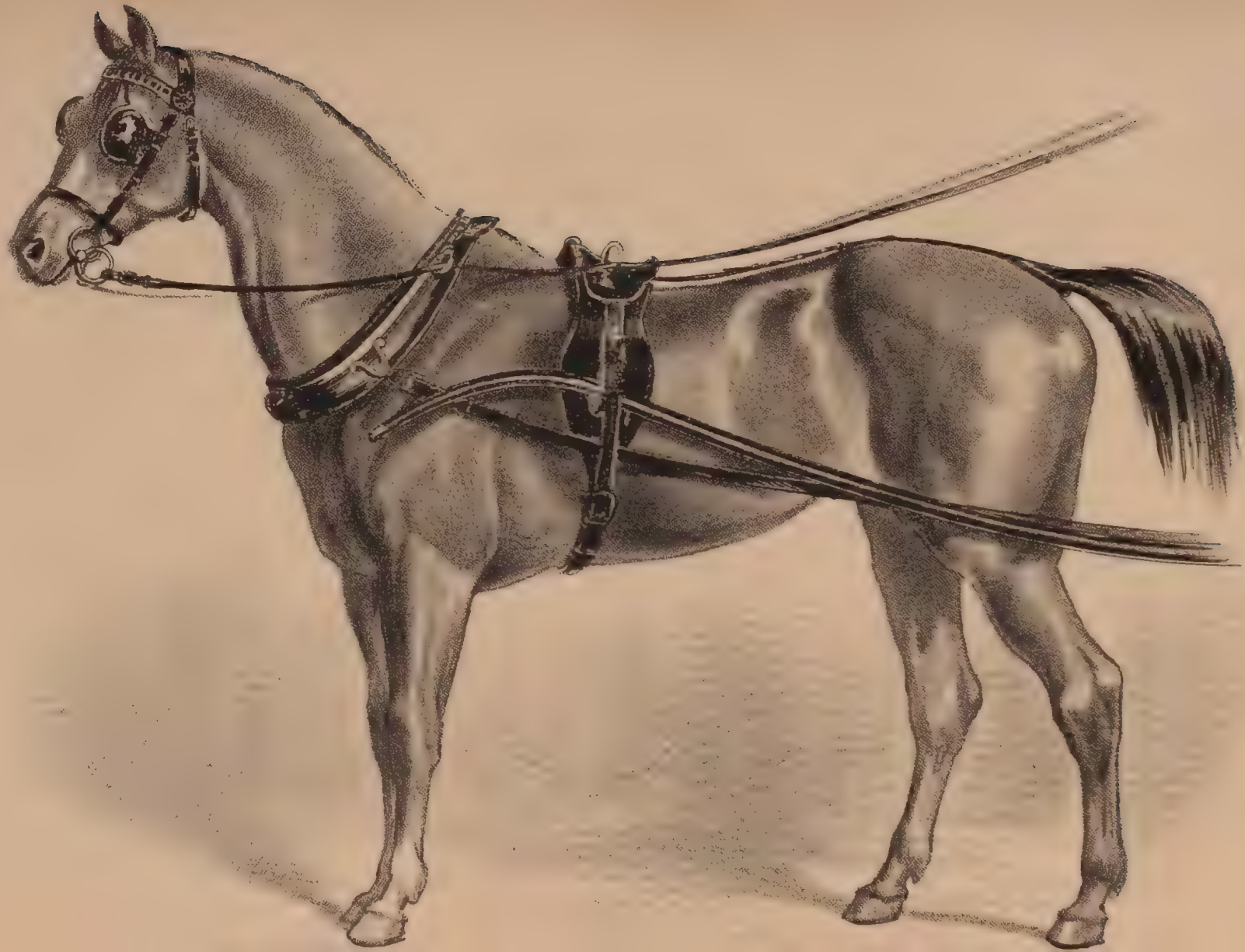
* In Glasgow the cart horses work without bearing-reins; but in Liverpool and Manchester the poor creatures tug at their heavy loads under the disadvantage of being deprived of the use of some of their most valuable muscles; their owners and drivers, following blind custom, think not, see not, feel

In No. 1 is shown the too prevalent mode of harnessing horses. A tight bearing-rein to pull his head up, a fixed martingale to pull it down, close blinkers to prevent his seeing his way, a crupper, which is obliged to be tight, to hold the bearing-rein in place, so that his head and tail are tied tight together. To obtain a little ease by shortening his back, when standing still, he extends his fore legs beyond their natural position, as seen in the plate, while the hinder ones are proportionably thrown back, for the ill effects of which see the letter of Mr. Darby, (Page 16). The tight bearing-rein, by holding the head in an unnatural and fixed position, strains the windpipe and respiratory organs, inducing roaring and other maladies, as shown in the letter from Mr. Gill, (Page 17). The front part of the bridle is frequently too short, thereby hurting the lower part of the ears, also the winker strap, which when tight, besides drawing the winkers too close, pulls forward the top of the bridle, so as to press upon and hurt the back of the ears, and when the horse shows signs of uneasiness, by throwing up his head, &c., he is punished by more and tighter straps, the coachman seldom troubling himself to find out and remedy the cause of the irritation.

not; why cannot some enlightened, humane individuals, especially those who belong to the Society, whose express vocation it is to abolish cruelty, see to these abuses, and try to rectify them?



OLD STYLE OF HARNESS-CRUELTY.
(SEE DARBY'S LETTER PAGE 16)



All harness is more or less an incumbrance, and here (Plate 2) I have left all that is necessary in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, doing away with bearing-reins, martingale, hook on the pad, swivel on the throat strap, and drop strap. Of course it must all fit well, and be properly adjusted.

Blinkers may afford protection to the eyes, if the driver is careless or cruel with his whip, as is often the case, but they should be always sufficiently wide apart to allow the horse to see his road and the objects before him (see Plate 3); but too frequently the poor animal is completely blindfolded, and then expected to act as if he had the use of his eyes. I have seen grooms, while leading horses with close blinkers, shamefully beat them when they have accidentally had their toes trodden on. No horse would tread on a man's toes, if he could see how to avoid them; and certainly they would not be so apt to shy if they could look at the objects which alarm them. As to collars, I find that saddlers generally make them fit well. I have examined more than 100 carriage horses without seeing a sore shoulder.

Many people have done away with the bearing-rein, and retain the bit with the cross-bar. I would advise that to be cut away, as the horse, having obtained more freedom of his head, may possibly when standing get the cross-bar caught on the end of the pole or shaft, unless they are made sufficiently long or short to prevent it.

Also, if a horse holding his head naturally low has the bearing-rein taken away, and the bit with a chain curb and long lever retained (as in Plate 1), he must of necessity *bore*. Therefore the coachman must see that he has a proper bit, probably the No. 1 bit in Plate 4 would suit, which would allow the horse to carry his head naturally, neither *boring* nor *stargazing*.

But, alas! coachmen have frequently so little knowledge of the art of driving, and so little feeling for their horses: they foolishly fancy that every fresh restraint they can put upon them, will make them safer and easier to drive; fashion also being in favour of the "wooden rocking horse" style. Masters and mistresses care or know nothing about it. In nine cases out of ten they do not own the horses, only job them, so there is not the sympathy between them that property might give.

Last year at different times I hired three horses; the job masters in each case saying they would not be responsible for the horses stumbling or falling if they were driven without bearing-reins. However I said I would take the responsibility; so I drove them several weeks without bearing-reins, and with easy bits, and they went well and pleasantly without once stumbling.

Plate 3.

SHEWING BLINKERS WIDE APART.

(SEE PAGE 6.)

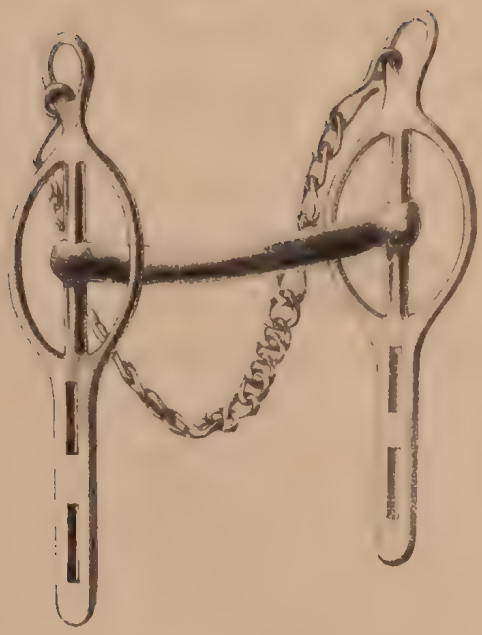
1

Capon driving Snaffle.

2

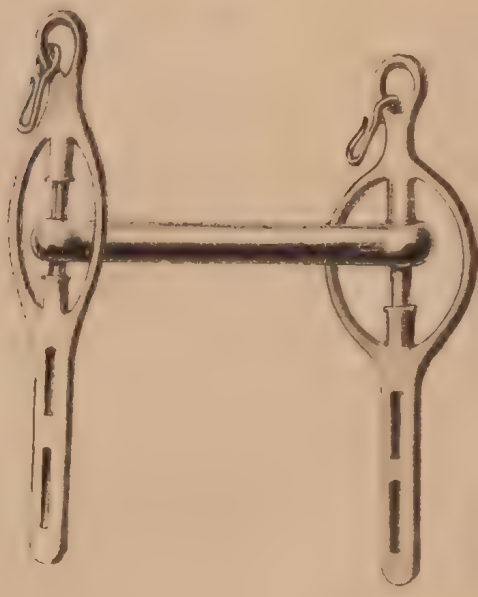
Fixed Liverpool Bit.

3



Cecil Bit.

4



Sliding Liverpool Bit.

Machine & Macdonald Lith.rs London

No. 1 Bit. "Capon driving Bit."

A ring snaffle, the mouth-piece having a slight curvature to avoid pressure on the tongue, and either plain, or a mild twist, it is strongly recommended by Mr. Aufrére, of Windermere, who writes thus, "I have read your excellent pamphlet on 'Gag Bits and Bearing-reins' with great pleasure. I have for years given up the use of both, considering them to be instruments of torture. I drive in the snaffle which I forward for your trial and acceptance, and I find it answer perfectly in every respect. I drive high-bred and spirited horses. They bend and go well in this bit, giving a steady and safe feel to the driver, and stand as quietly as if in their own boxes, and when waiting at any place do not rub at the pole head, as if wishing to get rid of their head gear. You may consider it heavy, but we find more purchase, and the horses go better than with the light and jointed snaffle. I use it both for single and double harness, and also for riding. After trial, I shall be glad of your opinion. We call it the 'Capon driving snaffle.'"

This is the bit which I use, and find it quite answers the above description. By looking at the plates, it can be seen that in this snaffle the bridle comes down into the ring, therefore it is necessary that it should be longer than with the other bits. Some people have tried this bit, and by not attend-

ing to this, have found the bit did not answer, when it would have done so had the bridle been lengthened so as to let the mouth-piece rest just above the tusks.

No. 2 is a *fixed* Liverpool bit, which many people prefer to a snaffle.

No. 3, "The Cecil Bit," is a fixed Liverpool bit, with a slight curve in the mouth-piece. This is the bit which in most cases I should recommend, both for double and single harness, driven in the cheek, without using the curb, unless absolutely necessary.

No. 4 is a sliding bit, generally called a Liverpool bit. I object to a sliding bit, because, as the coupling reins in double harness act crosswise, they are apt to pull the front half of the circle on to the horse's nostrils and cause great irritation. Besides that, when the sliding bit is worn, it frequently pinches the horse's lips. A fixed bit avoids these objections.

The following letter appeared in the "Times" last year; but I fear the excellent advice given is not much attended to. Therefore I say, abolish Bearing-reins altogether.

Bearing-Reins.

To the Editor of the Times.

"Sir,—I was walking back last night from M. Salvini's magnificent acting in Hamlet, and

passed rows of carriages drawn up in the ranks, the horses in which were in most cases throwing up their heads from the discomfort of their bearing-reins.

"Some persons advocate their entire suppression, but if put on loosely, and for short journeys, they are not objectionable.

"On the score of humanity, I would venture to appeal to their owners to give express directions to their coachmen to loosen the bearing-reins on every opportunity, but more especially at night, and in hot weather, when there are few to see whether the horses are forced to look smart.

"If left to themselves, the horses will rest well enough while waiting in the ranks, which they cannot do while straining at the then useless bearing-reins.

"Yours obediently,

"WESTMINSTER.

"Grosvenor-house, London,
June 24."

Lord Leigh wrote to me last year: "I am glad you have taken up this subject, as there is no doubt the London horses are much to be pitied, and using the bearing-rein is, as you say, a stupid and cruel practice."

He now says, "I congratulate you on your success, and trust the day is not far distant when a horse with a bearing-rein on him is as rare an

object to be seen as a soldier in armour, and should that happy day arrive, you may have the satisfaction of feeling that you have done as great a service to the poor horses, as Wilberforce did in his day to the poor slaves."

The following is from Admiral Rous. "Many thanks for your pamphlet on 'Bearing-reins.' I agree in every one of your sentiments; there may be singular cases of violent hard-mouthed horses, which a bearing-rein may be conducive to restrain, especially in a crowded city. I should add the abolition of blinkers, a horse hearing an unusual noise, becomes alarmed when he cannot discover the cause, but with his eyes open he is as sensible as a human creature. The sketches of horses' heads in your book, are beautifully correct, and worthy of preservation."

The late Sir Francis Head wrote to me, shortly before his death, "The ignorant, continued use of this gag-bit in the mouth of a carriage horse, whether in action or standing still, is an unnecessary, inexcusable, and barbarous piece of cruelty, and you will render a great service to the community, as well as to the horses, if you can succeed in suppressing it."

Colonel Somerset, who drives his fine team without bearing-reins, says that he drives his teams generally in ring snaffles, and has done so for some years. When horses are great pullers, he finds nothing so good as a leather bit, which he gets made

at Mr. Latchford's, bit maker, St. Martin's Lane. He says "there can be no doubt that ninety-nine horses out of a hundred do not require bearing-reins."

He also writes to me. "Many thanks for sending me the pamphlet. I have had great experience in driving, and have had a great many really hard pullers, horses that have pulled harder the thirty-sixth mile than the first. I have a great many severe bits of every kind, and have found that the only bit for such horses is a leather bit. I drive all my teams generally in ring snaffles, and have done so for some years."

Having mentioned Mr. Latchford, I will quote a few lines from his excellent work on Bridle bits, "*The Loriner*." He says, "On no account punish the horse, on no account hurt his mouth. When my friends have come to me, concerning their unmanageable horses, I invariably find the poor animal has been over bitted, or wrongly bitted, and recommend the easiest kind of bit, which, in nine cases out of ten, succeeds. I believe the horse has naturally no vice, that every description of vice found in the horse is created by the treatment he receives from those in whose care he is placed."

Mr. Torre, of Westbourne Terrace, writes to me, "You kindly gave me one of your pamphlets the other day, when I was on the look out for a bit for one of my horses which pulled to such an extent that it was a labour to drive, in fact, I almost made

up my mind to part with him. I have followed your directions, taking off the bearing-reins, and using a Liverpool bit, and now a child might drive him."

Another gentleman says, "I have read the little book on 'Bits and Bearing-reins' with much interest, and I hope profit. I have bought back my horse 'Banker;' he had always been ridden with a very tight curb, to make him show off, and it was nearly impossible to hold him when his mettle was up. My daughter now rides him with a snaffle, and he is perfectly manageable."

The following remark contained in a letter from Mr. Holmes, the eminent carriage builder in Derby, is worthy of attention. "At a large meeting, one coachmaker told me that he now always named in his specifications for harness, 'no bearing or badoon-reins, but if required, would be charged extra;' and that he had supplied very few, if any, bearing-reins since he had adopted this plan."

Mr. Souter, of 18, Haymarket, London, writes to me. "I am entirely of your opinion as regards bearing-reins, and think as they are generally used, they cause great torture, and do an immense deal of harm. I have lately made several sets of harness even without bearing-hooks, so you will see others think as you and I do."

Mr. Blackwell, 259, Oxford Street, says: "Sir, I have read your pamphlet on 'Gag Bearing-reins' carefully, and your remarks are very good. I have

always advocated their being dispensed with on all properly broken horses, and several of my customers, at my recommendation, have not used them for many years."

The following letter to me from Mr. Cracknell, the well-known coachman, as high an authority on driving as any in England, is very interesting, and ought to be convincing to any one who is sceptical as to the safety of driving without bearing-reins. "My remarks on the use and abuse of the bearing-rein are simple—my long experience has convinced me that it can only be used as an instrument of torture to the animal; they cannot exert their power, nor is it safe to use it, for if a horse falls he cannot rise until the bearing-rein is removed. I drove the 'Tantivy' coach nearly twenty years without a bearing-rein, and seldom had a horse fall, although they went at a great pace, and I frequently drove as many as seventy-two per day. The class of horses I had to drive were difficult, many of them being old steeple-chasers, hunters, Newmarket weeds, &c. My first experience in dispensing with the bearing-rein was between Henley-on-Thames and Hurley; it was the practice to walk the horses, a greater part of the hill being very steep. One day I left off the bearing-reins, and was astonished at the result; the horses never attempted to slacken their pace, but trotted the whole distance up the hill. From that time I dispensed with the bearing-rein entirely.

There was a strong prejudice at first with my colleagues against it, but eventually they adopted my plan. I had the most troublesome, dissipated horses to manage, but with a light hand, and their heads at liberty, they generally became tractable." —E. CRACKNELL.

The following letter is from Colonel Tyrwhitt to E. Cracknell: "I have been absent from London, or would have written sooner to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Flower's book, which you were good enough to forward to me, and which I have read with much interest. I entirely agree with Mr. Flower in what he says about the *abuse* of bearing-reins."

In reference to diseases brought on or aggravated by bearing-reins, I will quote two high authorities, one the well-known dealer in Rugby, Mr. Darby. He says "I think Mr. Flower's pamphlet an excellent one, and explains all; but I go a little further myself, and say that horses standing for a long time gagged up, it alters their natural position so much that they stretch out their fore legs, while waiting at doors, throwing all their weight on their heels, causing inflammation, and eventually navicular lameness, naturally also putting such a strain upon the back sinews, that they often give way from that cause only."

Mr. Samuel Gill, veterinary surgeon in Hastings, says: "Members of the veterinary profession are by no means ignorant of the various diseases pro-

duced by the use of the bearing-rein—roaring, apoplexy, coma, megrims, inflammation, and softening of the brain, all follow the barbarous use of this rein. To imagine the animal is prevented from falling by this reining up the head is an error. The pressure on the veins and arteries impeding the flow of blood, it is impossible for the animal stumbling to recover himself. I feel sure these who continue to use this torturing instrument have no idea of the pain they are inflicting, otherwise they would abolish this unnecessary portion of their harness, consigning it to the tomb of past absurdities."

The following circumstance was communicated to me by Mr. Woodley, of Upper Berkeley Street. He worked for the late B. Shaw, Esq., M.P., whose coachman ordered a very severe bit to be made for a horse that was very violent. On the bit being made, the servant exclaimed, "If I had known as much when I ordered it as I do now, it should not have been made, for one day while exercising in the Park, the horse exceedingly fresh and restive, the bearing-rein being up to the last hole, the strap suddenly broke. I thought it was all over with me, but to my surprise, the horse became at once manageable, and went beautifully, and the severe bit was never used."

I have sent copies of my pamphlet to all parts, hoping to check the growing evil. A nephew of mine living at Kingston, Jamaica, says "I have

lent your pamphlet to one of our largest livery stablemen. He at once accepted it, and took off all unnecessary restraints from his horses. The poor animals are often barbarously used here."

Mr. Whittem, proprietor of large collieries in Warwickshire, writes, "In reply to your inquiries, I found neither argument or remonstrance of any use with our carters, who, when my back was turned, returned to their habits. I found the only remedy was to remove the bearing-rein entirely; this I have done, and the horses now perform their hard work with much greater ease." In another letter, he says, "I have long discarded bearing-reins, when a driver has driving reins; but as our 60 horses are not driven with reins, we have a loose leading-strap fastened on one side of the bit, with the other end looped on one of the hames, for the purpose of leading the horses."

In the Life of John Wesley, the great divine, he relates how he read Homer's "Iliad," "Odyssey," &c. on horseback. He writes, "I was thinking how is it that no horse ever stumbles while I am reading? No account can possibly be given but this:— Because then I throw the reins on his neck. I set myself to observe, and I aver that in riding about a hundred thousand miles I scarce ever remember any horse (except two, that would fall head over heels any way) to fall, or make a considerable stumble, which I rode with a slack rein. To fancy, therefore, that a tight rein prevents stumbling is

a capital blunder. I have repeated the trial more frequently than most men in the kingdom can do. A slack rein will prevent stumbling if anything will."

The following remarks from a work entitled "Horse Shoeing; as it is, and as it should be," put the case clearly. "With the wrongly perverse idea that a horse needs holding up to his work, his head is tied to his collar by a long strap, termed a bearing-rein, which is so adjusted that if he makes but one false step, he must fall helplessly to the ground. Ignorant, selfish humanity will not perceive that from the horse's head to the tip of his tail is a series of joints, every one of which, when the horse is in motion requires to have free play, and that it is as necessary for him to have his head, neck, and tail free when moving at any pace, as it is for ourselves to have the use of our arms when walking or running."

I have just met the following remark from a no less authority than the late Lord Palmerston, "a runaway horse is best kept in, by a light hand and an easy snaffle."—*Life, by Hon. E. Ashley.*

I will conclude by quoting what Sir Arthur Helps (the author of "Friends in Council") has to say about bearing-reins. "Whenever you observe," he writes, "a horse, or horses, in a carriage, which horse, or horses are suffering from a tight bearing-rein, you may surely conclude that the owner is utterly unobservant of what he ought to observe,

or very ignorant of what he ought to know, or pompous, or cruel. He must be very unobservant, or he would see that his horses are suffering from this tight bearing-rein. He must be very ignorant if he does not know that a horse loses much of its power of draught, and cannot recover itself so well when it stumbles, if it have a tight bearing-rein. He must be very cruel if, observing and knowing these things he does not provide a remedy. He must be very pompous if he prefers that his horses should be made to rear their heads on high, and to rattle their trappings about (which is a sign of their exceeding discomfort), to their being dealt with humanely and reasonably. Well, then, I observe the equipages where this irrational tight bearing-rein is used. I then look at the arms on the carriages; and I know who are the greatest fools in London in the upper classes. The bewigged brute and idiot of a coachman of course thinks it a very fine thing to sit behind these poor animals with their stuck-up heads; but his master ought to know better."